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Marlinton, W. Va.

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

Chapter 5 - Section 3 - b

About the first doctor that ever settled in the county was a Dr. Tacy who lived near Greenbank. There is no one living who remembers him. He is said to have been a Frenchman and that he was at one time a surgeon in Napoleon's army. He came here in the 1830's about the time the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike was built by the French engineer Crozet. There is no record of him in the clerk's orrice. The story is told of this doctor that he said the most intricate piece of surgery he had ever performed was at the command of Emperor Napoleon. A soldier had gotten shot in the stomach with a heavy ball. He knew something drastic had to be done and that quickly, so hecalled for a sheep. He took out the man's stomach and put in the sheep's stomach. In a few weeks the soldier was well and back in the army. The patient lived to be a good old age, but ever after he had an abnormal craving for grass and green things in general.

The first graduate in medicine to locate in Pocahontas County was Dr. Geo. B. Moffett who practiced in Huntersville, in 1843, then the county seat, six miles east of Marlinton. Then came Dr. Matt Wallace about 1858 at Mill Point: Dr. John Ligon at Clover Lick, and Dr. S. P. Patterson at Huntersville just about the close of the Civil War; Dr. J. P. Moomau at Greenbank about 1870; Dr.C. P. Bryan, Hillsboro 1870; Dr. Richard Williams, Edray, 1876; Dr. James A. LaRue, Hillsboro,

1876; Dr. C. L. Austin, Greenbank, 1882; Dr. J. B. Lockridge, Minnehaha Springs, 1885; Dr. F. T. McClintic, Hillsboro, 1888; Dr. WM. T. Cameron, Linwood, 1889; Dr. J. M. Cunningham, Marlinton, 1891; Dr. J. W. Price, Marlinton, 1891; Dr. L. L. Little, Greenbank, 1894; Dr. Harry L. Beard, Millpoint, 1894; Dr. John M. Barnett, Frost, 1894; Dr. Page D. Barlow, Edray, 1897; Dr. W. H. McNeel, Hillsboro, 1898; Dr. L. Hunter Moomau, Greenbank, 1899; Dr. John M. Yeager, Marlinton, 1901; Dr. Susan A. Price, Marlinton, 1903; Dr. Norman R. Price, Marlinton, 1903; (J. W., Susan A. and Norman R. Price, all of the same family); Dr. Edgar W. Guilford, Marlinton, 1904; Dr. Geo. F. Hull, Durbin, 1906; Dr. A. O. Howard, Marlinton, 1907; Dr. A. E. Burner, Durbin, 1908; Dr. U. H. Hannah, Cass, 1909; Dr. J. W. R. Smith, Hillsboro, 1909; Dr. Harry C. Solter, Marlinton, 1914; Dr. WM. C. McCord, Marlinton, 1914; Dr. L. C. McCutcheon, Greenbank, 1925; Dr. J. M. Cofer, Slaty Fork, 1921; Dr. Kenneth J. Hamrick, Marlinton, 1933.

These men have all been graduates of accredited medical schools and high class men.

In further reference to the physicians of the county, before the coming of the allophathic doctors and even after, we had quite a number of herb doctors, or as they called it "arb", who had quite a reputation, some good and some bad, and a great deal of it amusing.

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PIONEER FAMILY

Soon after the war of 1812 there came to our county one of the most interesting and eccentric personalities that our older people remember anything about. Mrs. Diana Saunders, late of Rocky Point on Dry Branch of Swago. Her cabin home was built near the head springs of Dry Branch, almost in speaking distance of the Rocky Point schoolhouse, and just below.

But few people left their impress upon the writer's memory more vividly than Mrs. Diana Saunders. As to her personality, she had been formed in nature's choicest mould a and in her youth must have been the peer of Edgar Allen Poe's "rare and radiant maiden

The writer was frequently told by his lamented mother that when he was an infant about six weeks old he had the whooping cough so severely that he was given up to die. As a last resort Granny Saunders was sent for in haste, and w when she arrived the baby was to all appearances cold and dead. The doctress ordered a tub of hot water, plouted the baby in, soaked him a while and, gave him a good rubbing. She then called for a razor and a goose quill, scarified the little body between the shoulders, inserted the quill and gave him a blowing up until the infant began to blow for himself. He came to and recovered and has been blowing seventy years on his own hook.

It would be hard to exaggerate the useful services

performed by Mrs. Saunders, for a half century or more, when there was no resident physician nearer than Warm Springs or Lewisburg. For years and years her time was virtually spent in the homes of the suffering. Stormy nights, swollen, raging mountain streams and torrents were braved by this woman to be with the sick in their distress.

While it is true that most of her services were rendered in scenes over which the thickest veil of privacy should ever be drawn, yet she never lost her self posession. The patient might beto all appearances in extremes, with less than a step between her and death in the throes of maternity, all about her convulsed with grief and apprehension except Granny Saunders.She would dip her pipe into the ashes, ejaculate prayers along with the puffs of smoke, and sit down by the patient, "Hold on old girl, we can't spare yoy yet; pick your flint and try it again. I have been praying for you and the good Lord Almighty never goes back on his word."

Persons still living remember the reply she once made to the salutation, "Well, Granny, how are you today?"

"Poorly enough to tell you the truth. O dear, I am just here and that's all. I have pains in my face, pains in my ears, pains in the top of my head, at the back of my neck, between my shoulders, in my arms, in my breast, in my body, in my knees, in my ankles, in both my big toes."

Then pausing a moment as if trying to think of more places for pains, she would raise her eyes before heaven and devoutely exclaim, "But praise the Lord, bless His Holy Name, I have a good appetite."

One of the pioneer citizens of our county was the late David Hannah, of the Old Field Branch of Elk. He was the son of David Hannah, Senior, who was the progenitor of t the Hannah family, one of the oldest in Pocahontas. David Hannah, Senior, was a native of Ireland. He married a Miss Gibson, who was reared in Augusta County, and settled at the mouth of Locust Creek soon after the Revolutionary War. He posessed some practical knowledge of medicine of the botanical school, and did a good deal of practice in frontier times. He was probably the first person that ever practiced physics in lower Pocahontas.

John McNeil married Rebecca McNeil from Franklin County, Virginia and settled on Dry Creek at the place now occupied by his grandson, Charles McNeil. He was prominent in his church, the Methodist Episcopal; a member of the court; a faithful competent school teacher, and posessed knowledge of of medical remedies and at a time when physicians were no nearer than Frankford or Warm Springs. His services freely given were of great comfort and relief to the suffering brfore regular attention could be had.

Thomas Bradshaw, son of the pioneer John Bradshaw, married Nancy Williams and settled on Browns Creek, three miles from Huntersville. He exchanged farms with his brother William, and moved to the Bradshaw place near Millpoint. He was a botanical physician of the Thompsonian School, and had all of Pocahontas County for his practice. Lobelia and "No. 6" were the main remedies employed, along with hot baths and bleeding. He died at an advanced age at Huntersville in 1862.

William Moore was the youngest son of Moses Moore. He spent most of his life on Knapps Creek. His wife, old "Aunt Teenie", as she was so familiarly called by the neighbors was one of the most helpful and benevolent persons in seasons of sickness or bereavement. She spared no pains , day or night, at all seasons, Aunt Teenie's skillful hand would be one of the first to bring relief, when pain and anguish furrowed a neighbor's brow, or when the death angel was heard knocking at the door of someone's house.

History of Pocahontas County, by
Dr. Wm. T. Price